

What is it?

Critical pedagogy has existed as an approach to education for almost 50 years, with antecedents going back much further than this, with roots in the enlightenment and working-class political education in the eighteenth century (Nicholls, 2017). It grew out of a concern among educationalists in the late 1960s with how education was being used as a method to reinscribe power relations in society, to create a 'common sense' that reinscribed dominant elites' social positions as 'natural and inevitable', and rather than to develop enquiring minds, to shut them down and make exclusive knowledge creation.

The aim of critical pedagogy is therefore to reverse this and illuminate the oppressed about their oppression. The ideas behind critical pedagogy, in its modern form, were described by Paulo Freire (1968) and since developed by authors such as Henry Giroux, Ira Shor, Michael Apple, Joe L Kincheloe, Shirley R Steinberg and Peter McLaren. It aims to give students, and people in general, the tools to undo, rethink and challenge their received wisdoms about what constitutes knowledge and education. Speaking to this book series, critical pedagogy has at its heart critical thinking.

Why is it important?

Thus described, critical pedagogy might sound like a concern for social scientists and perhaps the more radical end of education studies. However, critical pedagogy goes far deeper and wider than this. It goes right to the heart of the fundamental questions of what education is about, who is it for and how it is done, regardless of the subject being taught. It can also help the contemporary academic make sense of their place in the world.

Let us consider for a moment the predicament of the modern lecturer. Lecturing can be a lonely business. Many lecturers often feel ill-prepared for teaching and worry about this aspect of the job. Teaching is largely undertaken on our own, often without support or feedback, and in the UK we are measured on it via crude mechanisms such as the National Student Survey, module evaluations and the Teaching Excellence Framework. In this context, it is important because many of our students, and academics, feel increasingly disconnected from the passion that lead to them starting

this journey. We can feel encouraged to teach to the lowest common denominator, to simplify everything, and to teach to the assessment criteria knowing we are judged by such crude measures as the National Student Survey and tick-box evaluations. We have heard many colleagues say they feel that we do not have time, and the students the inclination, to engage in wider, critical debate.

Academics also report feeling under siege in other ways, with an erosion of autonomy, democracy and accountability in their institutions. Neoliberalism and neo-managerialism have penetrated deep into academia, simultaneously constricting, intensifying and infantilising it. Examples include the expansion of workloads (Davies and Bansel, 2005; Hartman and Darab, 2012); a ‘performativity’ culture (Ball, 2012; Green, 2012); consumerist ‘accountability’ metrics (Bleiklie, 1998; Shore and Wright, 2004); heightened competition (Davies and Bansel, 2007; Nixon, 2011), and the commodification and instrumentalisation of knowledge and educational goals (Ball, 2012; Bullen et al, 2010; Nixon, 2011).

Many academics similarly report a dumbing down of their research, through how they apply for funding, what they can get funding for, and where and how they are expected to disseminate it. Critical pedagogy hopefully offers a way that we can connect and reconnect with our subject and our teaching, and make for a better experience for our students and ourselves. This book assesses whether critical pedagogy as an approach has potential resonance with educationalists looking for ‘another way’, who wish to make education vital and relevant again. Critical pedagogy can also offer academics a way of reconnecting with ourselves, of understanding our own positions in society and within our institutions, contextualising and mediating the forces modern academics are subject to. We, in turn, can be a part of the process of enabling students to consider their own positionalities. Most importantly, critical pedagogy offers hope. Hope to sustain us in difficult times when the aforementioned forces seem to become overwhelming, and we cannot see a way through them.

Why now?

We live in interesting times in higher education. The Covid crisis has entailed a rethink of what constitutes the classroom, and in turn questions the relative roles students, tutors, and power relations the pedagogic process. KPMG, one of the most neoliberal in the new private sector players in the higher education sector, opened their 2020 report ‘The future of higher education in a disruptive world’ with the following:

The Golden Age of universities in the developed world is passing and life is becoming tougher. Rising costs are no longer matched by a willingness of governments and

students to pay for them. And yet the traditional operating model of a university cannot produce sufficient productivity gains to cover the gap.

(KPMG, 2020, p 2)

The report calls for wholesale change in pedagogy, curriculum and assessment, and a new relationship with students and the outside world. A half-hearted move to blended learning will not do; a transformation is needed. Neoliberals will undoubtedly, as the report starts to do, develop an individualised consumerist interpretation of what this transformation could mean. Those of us that want an alternative need to be able to articulate what this could look like and build for it. We do not want a return to the status quo because the status quo perpetuated certain privileges and institutionalised structural discrimination against disadvantaged groups (Seal, 2021).

The structure of the book

The aims of this book are to:

- » provide a comprehensive introduction to enabling critical pedagogy in higher education;
- » explore the theoretical debates and tensions entailed in such an endeavour;
- » give practical examples of enabling critical pedagogy at an institutional level, within the curriculum, within assessment, through learning and teaching and in the spaces in between;
- » outline the conditions for critical pedagogy to be able to flourish within higher education.

The book intends to facilitate the active engagement of the reader. As such we highlight examples, critical issues, critical questions for practice and end of chapter summaries. The book comprises seven chapters. The rest of this [first chapter](#) explores some of the key themes of critical pedagogy, including its principles, aims, approaches and steps to enact it. [Chapter 2](#) explores the possibilities of enacting critical pedagogy in curriculum design. [Chapter 3](#) discusses enacting critical pedagogy in assessment. [Chapter 4](#) discusses enacting critical pedagogy in learning and teaching. [Chapter 5](#) explores other spaces and initiatives within the university where critical pedagogy can happen and be encouraged. [Chapter 6](#) explores the possibilities and conditions for being a critical pedagogue within higher education, giving a useful set of criteria for an institution to consider in supporting critical pedagogy. The final chapter serves as a conclusion. It argues that it is possible to enact critical pedagogy within

higher education, even at a structural level, although we need to be realistic about the limitations. It returns to the principles, aims and approaches of critical pedagogy and reflects on the steps to be taken.

Principles, aims and approaches of critical pedagogy

Critical pedagogy has a set of underlying principles, a set of aims and suggested approaches. As [Figure 1.1](#) indicates, these all stem from, and nestle within, each other. Throughout the book we will relate the examples given back to these principles, aims and approaches.

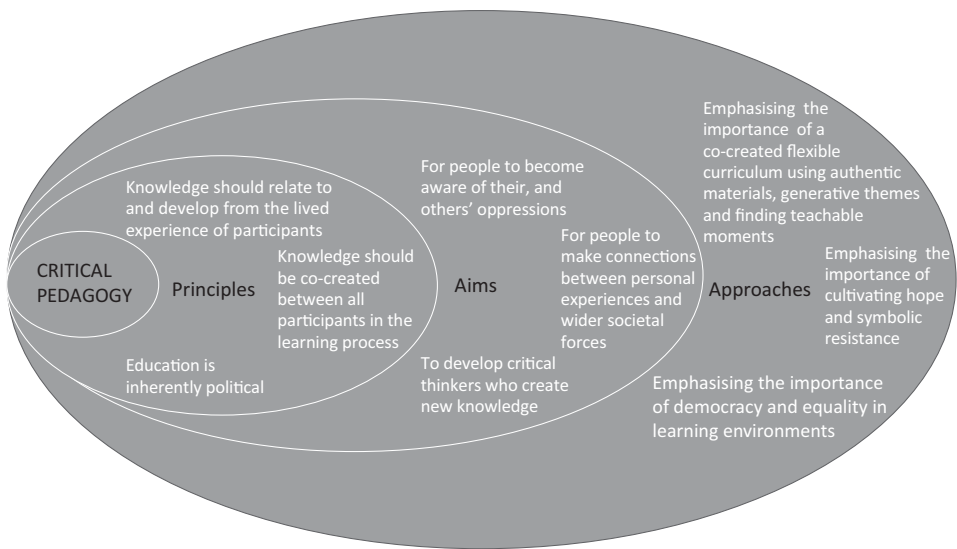


Figure 1.1 Principles, aims and approaches of critical pedagogy.

Principles

Education is inherently political

Critical pedagogy seeks to de-neutralise education and knowledge creation and acknowledge it is inherently political, particularly where it concerns human relations. A common association with knowledge, and particularly theory, is that it is something created or discovered by ‘objective’, ‘neutral’ ‘experts’, often under scientific conditions. This scientific approach, useful for understanding the material world, is conflated to humans. Education is traditionally seen as a ‘banking’, ‘neutral’

process whereby this ‘objective’ knowledge is transferred, via a teacher who knows it, to students who do not. The process of students absorbing this knowledge is called learning. Students are not encouraged to question the knowledge they receive. Crucially, when a student applies this learning to their experiences and finds that it does not tally, they have either not understood the knowledge correctly, or not applied it correctly, or their experiences are not representative, and nobody is ever encouraged to question the validity or truth of what has been taught.

Knowledge should relate to and develop from the lived experience of participants

Traditionally, knowledge and theory making is abstracted from most people’s everyday lived experience. For critical pedagogues, theory needs to relate to the lived experiences of people, and where it does not, we need to change it for the better. One word for this is praxis, and critical pedagogy has consistently described itself as a praxis (Batsleer, 2012; Ord, 2000; Smith, 1994). Praxis is often interpreted as the synthesis of theory and action. However, it is more complex, subtle and radical than this. Critical pedagogy has a dynamic, dialectical view of how knowledge is created (Aristotle, 1976). It sees knowledge as an evolving thing (Carr and Kemmis, 1989), and this needs to be shared with students.

Example 1.1

Sharing the nature of knowledge with students

Relevant principles: *knowledge should be co-created between all participants in the learning process.*

Relevant aims: *to develop critical thinkers who create new knowledge.*

Relevant approaches: *emphasising the importance of democracy and equality in learning environments.*

As educators we sometimes hear students groan when we don’t give them the answers: why are we making it hard for them, can we not just tell them what is right? A critical pedagogue’s response would be that this is not us being awkward. Behind this refusal is a powerful thought about education – that knowledge is not static; it is dynamic. It is created through dialogue. In a very real sense we cannot tell students what is right, for there is rarely a right. Sometimes the student will know more than we do, and we should acknowledge this and let them educate us. We have to create and contest knowledge together.

Knowledge should be co-created between all participants in the learning process

Critical pedagogues view knowledge as something we create through dialogue with each other. Cho (2010) describes knowledge as '*democratic, context-dependent, and appreciative of the value of learners' cultural heritage*' (p 315). The creation of this evolving knowledge is an active democratic process that entails interrogation of the world by all parties. This means not simply acknowledging the diversity and multiculturalism in the room, as this would construct people's views of cultures, including their own, as monolithic. Critical pedagogy may well entail challenging and changing cultural norms (Freire, 1970a, p 12). Being oppressed does not make one less subject to dominant hegemonies.

Aims of critical pedagogy

To develop critical thinkers who create new knowledge

The most important thing we are doing as educators is enabling people to become critical thinkers – knowledge creators, able to apply and synthesise new ideas and information into new ways of thinking as situations change and evolve. The break between experience, practice and theory needs to be challenged and students need to see how they have a right and duty to create new knowledge. However, this is not an easy process. For learning to be critical is, and should be, challenging, particularly as the first thing we need to do is challenge our own assumptions about learning and re-evaluate our previous experiences of it. People are distanced from their natural critical thinking skills and at the same time encouraged to think individualistically about their views, as though they are commodities to which they have a right. Both sides of this need to be challenged. As illustrated below, consumerisation can extend, and manifest, in interactions in the classroom.

Example 1.2

Challenging the consumer dynamic

Relevant principles: *education is inherently political. Knowledge should relate to and develop from the lived experience of participants.*

Relevant aims: *to develop critical thinkers who create new knowledge. For people to make connections between personal experiences and wider societal forces.*

Relevant approaches: *emphasising the importance of democracy and equality in learning environments. Cultivating hope and symbolic resistance.*

This challenge has been ever more apparent in the UK, with the impact of student loans and the emphasis on consumer practices embodied by the Competition and Marketing Authority's interest in higher education. This commodification has led to a growing individualisation, which in turn creates a sense that everyone can assert their individual right to voice an opinion and then closing down any opportunity to engender a learning opportunity when students say, after asserting something, *'well that's what I think'*, quickly followed by *'I am entitled to my opinion'*. A critical pedagogue's response could go along the lines of *'sorry, but in our spaces, this isn't good enough – you have to defend your opinions, be open to change, and sometimes have the bravery to stand alone.'*

For people to become aware of their, and others', oppressions

For Freire, becoming a critical thinker entails 'conscientisation'. Drawing on Gramsci, critical pedagogues work to encourage students to *'develop a critical consciousness of who they are and what their language represents by examining questions of language, culture, and history through the lens of power'* (Brito et al, 2004, p 23). They need to become aware of their own oppression, and by extension understand how others are oppressed. However, this is no simple process.

Critical issues

Who determines when and how someone is oppressed?

There are issues with the idea of conscientisation, particularly the idea of 'false consciousness', a term developed by Engels, not Marx, whereby people are not aware of their own oppression. Rancière (1992) critiqued Bourdieu for privileging the role of the intellectual and condemning the masses as unknowing and in need of liberation. Instead, Rancière views the working class as inherently capable of learning and developing intellect. However, they have been led to believe that they are not intelligent by a hegemonic system that deliberately undermines their self-belief. In addition, they may have lost the will to use their analytic abilities, in the face of seemingly monolithic social forces where they have been forced to prioritise short-term survival.



For Rancière the pedagogue should act under the assumption that we are all intelligent enough to understand the world, and that, given access to resources, we can discern the knowledge that will facilitate this understanding. He invites the pedagogue to become ignorant, not that they deny their knowledge, or hide it, but they should not privilege it – we should uncouple our mastery from our knowledge. The role of the educator is two-fold. First, to act on the students' will, self-belief and efficacy, the will to engage and challenge themselves and others, and to wish to learn. Second, an educator's role is to attend to the content of what argument people are creating, but only in terms of ensuring people's arguments have logic and internal consistency, but that they attend to, understand and deconstruct the language behind those arguments and the concepts behind the language. This entails gaining access to resources, often intellectual resources, but it does not mean we determine the content of those resources.

For people to make connections between personal experiences and wider societal forces

Freire (1970b) names three levels of consciousness: intransitive, semi-transitive and critical consciousness. Those with an intransitive consciousness accept their lives as they are and take the view that any changes are for reasons beyond their control and seen as fate. Those with a semi-transitive consciousness are aware of their problems and still think of them as inevitable, but they may think they can change things on a local level. Actions are therefore often localised and short term. It is only when people have a critical consciousness that they see the structural dimensions of their problems, making connections between their problems and the social context in which these problems are embedded, both in terms of analysis and actions that will challenge their structural oppressions as well as addressing some of their immediate concerns.

Approaches in critical pedagogy

Emphasising the importance of democracy and equality in learning environments

For critical pedagogues, learners have their own theories and ideas about the world, and this needs to be our starting place (Bolton, 2010). Similarly, critical pedagogues need to challenge the colonisation of democracy in education through its construction as consumerism. Under this construction, education needs to be delivered in a way that students like, and say things that they like, supposedly measured through

things like the UK's National Student Survey – this is again not critical pedagogy, or a true informed democracy, which would both be very challenging. Critical pedagogues need to deconstruct with the student how consumerism is a constricting and deceptive form of democracy that placates rather than liberates.

Being truly democratic can be difficult for some educators as it means they have to acknowledge and challenge the structures they operate within, including the power and privilege it bestows on them – the '*power which is given to them through their titles*' (Foley, 2007). We need to be explicitly humble and challenging of our own privilege, any deference we get. We also need to disrupt learners' passivity in their relationships with us and each other. As Joldersma (1999) notes, there is a certain familiar complacency in this for learners; they can sit back and receive, not taking responsibility for their learning, or the learning environment. Some learners passively resist, as they may have done at school, taking small chances to undermine the authority of the teacher. However, this can be in a non-constructive way that can in turn be infantilised by the teacher. We can also go too far too soon, as the example below illustrates.

Example 1.3

The need to take time; liberation is rarely instant

Relevant principles: *education is inherently political. Knowledge should be co-created between all participants in the learning process.*

Relevant aims: *to develop critical thinkers who create new knowledge. For people to become aware of their, and others', oppressions and develop the will to act.*

Relevant approaches: *emphasising a co-created flexible curriculum using authentic materials, generative themes and finding teachable moments. Cultivating hope and symbolic resistance.*

Mike remembers once teaching a group of master's students a module focusing on critical pedagogy and during the introductory session was going through the learning outcomes as is common practice. He was suddenly struck by the irony of reading these out when critical pedagogy was the antithesis of this. He ripped up the piece of paper he was reading and said that the group should come up with their own curriculum and learning outcomes and he would then take it to a module approval panel. He left them alone for an hour to do this, but when he came back they had got the paper he had ripped up out of the bin and were trying to put it back together – he had pushed them too quickly and too far out of their comfort zone.

Emphasising a co-created flexible curriculum using authentic materials, generative themes and finding teachable moments

Some of the fundamental techniques within critical pedagogy that flow from these principles are having a flexible curriculum with authentic materials, finding teachable moments and discovering generative themes.

Flexible curriculum and using authentic materials

A fundamental within critical and emancipatory education is that no one methodology can work for all cultures, populations and situations (Degener, 2001). All decisions related to curricula, including the material to be studied, should be based on the needs, interests, experiences and situations of students (Giroux, 2012; Shor, 1992). Furthermore, students, as Giroux (2012) puts it, should be active participants in designing and correcting the curricula – most fundamentally the curriculum needs to relate to the lived social and economic lives of the learner, and help them move from the micro of their situations and crises to see the wider social-economic forces behind them, and their contradictions (Degener, 2001).

Furthermore, the materials used for education should come from and have resonance with people's everyday lives and include books poems, films and adverts (Keesing-Styles, 2003; Kincheloe, 2005; Ohara et al, 2000). They can be equally brought to the table by tutors and students, and especially students as their consciousness develops. It is in linking people's everyday experiences and crises to wider socio-economic forces that people start to see '*both the reproductive nature and the possibility of resistance to problematic content*' (Aliakbari and Faraji, 2011, p 80).

Generative themes

Taking this further is the idea of generative themes (Aliakbari and Faraji, 2011). This is where the group, in deciding the curriculum and theme to be explored, is seeking themes with certain characteristics. Themes should firstly be a galvanising force for the community, something about which there is passion and feelings. Secondly, the theme must have tensions and contradictions within it, things that do not add up that need to be worked through and have a potential to create something new that resolves these tensions. These tensions should not be allowed to become negative, but their energy turned into a positive incentive to change. Generative themes should also open up discussion about, and relate to, wider social issues. In doing so they can lead to the opening up of other generative themes (ie a generative theme has the seed of other generative themes within it). Finally, generative themes must have the

potential for action, that something concrete can be done about them. An illustration of how this has been done is outlined below.

Example 1.4

From individual experience to collective action

Relevant principles: *education is inherently political. Knowledge should relate to and develop from the lived experience of participants.*

Relevant aims: *to develop critical thinkers who create new knowledge. For people to make connections between personal experiences and wider societal forces.*

Relevant approaches: *emphasising a co-created flexible curriculum using authentic materials, generative themes and finding teachable moments.*

Within the foundation year, Mike would get students to explore their own educational experiences, and to not see themselves as in deficit. They then explore higher education and look at who it is for and how it is structured. A field trip is organised to Oxford, both the university and the city, and many students experience a visceral sense of contradictions and unease, aware of their own lack of social capital, coterminous with a belief that they have a right to higher education. This is then unpacked back at the university and has meant that a number of students have become engaged in challenging the Augar report (2019), which is a direct threat to foundation years and widening participation. The post-18 review was announced in February 2018. Since then the independent panel, chaired by Philip Augar, undertook an extensive programme of stakeholder engagement and evidence gathering. This report sets out their findings and policy recommendations for government consideration.

Teachable moments

One of the characteristics of critical pedagogy is the ability to think in the moment and improvise (Seal and Harris, 2014; Smith, 1994). This can mean recognising that a particular session plan is not working, or having resonance, and adjusting it accordingly. On another level this can mean spotting and seizing an opportunity to relate a discussion to wider issues. However, the responsibility for this should not lie with the pedagogue alone. Key features of Mike's foundation year include three hours of curriculum-free student-led small group tutorials a week. This is cited by students as one of the transformative elements of the course.

Emphasising the importance of cultivating hope and symbolic resistance

One of the dangers of critical pedagogy is that while it is good at critique, it leaves us with little hope. Freire always came back to hope, seeing it as a fundamental part of being human: *'Hope is an ontological need ... I am hopeful, not out of mere stubbornness, but out of an existential concrete imperative'* (2004, p 2). For Freire hope is part of the human condition; the role of education is not conceived as one of instilling hope but rather of evoking it (Webb, 2010). Freire warns that the hope of the progressive educator cannot be that of *'an irresponsible adventurer'* (2004, p 77). Several times in his writings Freire equates hope with waiting – not the passive waiting of one who folds their arms in resignation, but the 'active waiting' of one who persistently seeks and struggles (Freire, 2004). Mike has commented on this elsewhere as one of the reasons we should try to enable critical pedagogy within higher education.

We should not fall into traps of thinking that if the rebellion does not take power, the revolution does not succeed, we have failed. Foucault taught us that power plays out at lots of levels, so by definition it can be contested at those levels – and will eventually start to falter at them.

(Seal, 2014, p 134)

Conclusion: how critical pedagogy can be enabled – a step process

Critical pedagogy could seem an intimidating project, or one simply out of reach of the average lecturer, who often does not have, or at least feel they have, much institutional influence, let alone potential wider impact. We see enabling critical pedagogy in higher education as a step process. It is fine to stay at the first step. You will become part of a process of change. We also hope that this slightly frustrates you and you start thinking about engaging with steps two and three. There is step four, where critical pedagogues start coming together and supporting each other in changing our whole institutions and the sector radically. We have not outlined this step because it has yet to happen, and how to do this needs to be worked out collectively.

Step one: change how you teach and your relationship with students

Change what you can within the restrictions you have. Often, as a lecturer, we are given a module, with set learning outcomes, a set curriculum and a set assessment. We have even heard of colleagues who have their PowerPoints and learning

materials scrutinised, with quality assurance and even consumer management assurance given as reasons (neither of these regimes ask for these things in fact). However, they cannot control what happens in the classroom, how we manage the PowerPoints we may have been given, and how we spin off them and work with student comments and contributions. If you do this, students will respond and ‘engage’ and ‘participate’ more, all things that higher education struggles with. They will also often do better in terms of marks and retention as a result, again things that will give you leverage.

Step two: push the structure as far as you can and build alliances

Once you have some success, you will have the leverage to build on what you are doing, mainly because you are dovetailing with institutional priorities. All assessment criteria and learning objectives are interpretable and we have given examples of how people have worked within these constrictions. Learning objectives are full of vagaries such as ‘exploring relevant social policy and theories’, or ‘describe the Universe and explain and interpret the evidence base for the description’ (taken from an astrophysics module). Who determines what is relevant, or counts as evidence, does not have to come from the lecturer.

As lecturers we need to move away from thinking ‘how do I get across to students the information I know they need to know?’ to thinking ‘how do we explore what information is relevant, and how can we find out about it, together?’ Assessments are often reviewed annually, and courses revalidated every five years. This means you will have opportunities to change the structures you work within. It is possible to say that the learning objectives and assessment will be negotiated with students; you just have to win over quality assurance professionals as to why this is needed and see them as an ally. All this will mean winning over colleagues, who will be naturally curious about what you are doing, particularly if it is seen to be working.

Step three: be seen as a pedagogic expert, internally and externally

While being an expert is in some ways an anathema to the critical pedagogue, you may need to become an expert in deconstructing the idea of being an expert. This means engaging with the teaching and learning process of the university, getting recognition for teaching through schemes such as the Advance HE Fellowships and awards such as National Teaching Fellowships in the UK for your expertise in critical pedagogy. It also means writing, and there are plenty of publishers and journals that will be interested in your work. It also means taking research opportunities – most

universities have funds for undertaking staff–student partnerships, and these are perfect for enacting critical pedagogy.

Reach out to colleagues; all universities will have centres for learning and teaching, who will help you set up groups and events. Present at the learning and teaching conference all institutions have – offer to run a strand, even the whole thing. Similarly, you can present what you have been doing externally – there is the British and American Educational Research Associations (BERA and AERA), the Society for Research into Higher Education and many subject-based associations, which often also run special interest groups. At this point you may also want to consider career progression, either as a programme leader, giving you much more scope to develop courses with critical pedagogy embedded, or going down the professorial route, meaning you will have much scope in influencing – there are now routes to becoming a professor in learning and teaching, but this still entails undertaking pedagogic research and publications, which you have started to do.

Critical questions for practice

- » How could you expose and deconstruct your power in the classroom? How would you feel about doing this?
- » How can you meaningfully involve your students in creating their own curriculum?
- » Can you think of a generative theme that has arisen in your classroom recently, something that has the seeds to open up wider questions and make wider links?
- » Can you think about a teachable moment you have had, when you have decided to act on a student comment in the moment and take the lecture in a different direction?

Summary

- The focus of critical pedagogy is to co-create critical reflectors who can recognise their own oppression, deconstruct prevailing hegemonies in education and expose its political nature.

- It believes knowledge should be rooted in the experience of everyone and knowledge creation is an organic democratic process that necessitates the breaking down of barriers between teachers, learners and knowledge creators and cultivating hope.
- Its techniques include having a curriculum negotiated with learners and using authentic materials from their experience, developing generative themes that open up discussion about, and relate to, wider social issues, building on spontaneous teachable moments.

Useful texts

Freire, P (1972) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

The classic critical pedagogy text giving an exploration of dialogue and the possibilities for liberatory practice. Freire seeks to transform the relationship between students, teachers and society. Freire introduces the highly influential notion of banking education, highlights the contrasts between education forms that treat people as objects rather than subjects and explores education as action.

Freire, P (1995) *Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum.

This book began as a new preface to his classic work. Its importance lies in Freire's reflection on the text and how it was received, and on the development of policy and practice subsequently and the importance of cultivating hope for critical pedagogues. He argues that although hope alone is not enough to achieve liberation, without hope there is no struggle at all.

Giroux, H A (2020) *On Critical Pedagogy*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

In this book, Giroux analyses the increasingly empirical orientation of teaching, focusing on the culture of positivism, and examines some of the major economic, social and political forces undermining the promise of democratic schooling in both public and higher education. He argues against the tendency by both right wing and neoliberal interests to reduce schooling to training, and students merely to customers. Giroux also considers the legacy of Freire and issues a fundamental challenge to educators, public intellectuals and others who believe in the promise of radical democracy.